



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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TRANSPORTATION CRACKDOWN REVEALS RISKS TO CHILDREN *STATE INSPECTORS SPENT SUMMER WORKING TO KEEP KIDS SAFE*

NASHVILLE-- The Tennessee Department of Human Services recently wrapped up its annual summer transportation inspections of child care agencies across the state. Child care licensing staff conducted nearly 600 visits during June, July and mid-August. More than 100 agencies were "Put on Notice" after inspectors found violations that ranged from broken seatbelts to incomplete logs to no transportation training.

A total of eight agencies voluntarily suspended their licenses to transport, including three in East Tennessee, three in Middle Tennessee and two in West Tennessee. Critical violations included leaving a child behind at the center after the rest of the children were taken on a field trip. A driver at one of the agencies did not have a driver's license or drug screen. Several of the agencies also had problems with their logs. Accurate logs help ensure that providers know exactly where all of the children are and that all of the children are off the van or bus.

"Our staff has been working closely with providers across the state to ensure that children are safe when they are being transported either to and from home or on field trips," said Commissioner Gina Lodge. "While we did find many problems, we are very pleased that there were hundreds of agencies that are doing things right, especially given how hot it has been this summer. Too many times in the past, failure to follow basic rules has resulted in tragedy. That's why the providers and our licensing staff must remain ever vigilant."

Since 1997, four Memphis children have died after being forgotten in hot daycare vans. A Shelby County baby died last summer and another child died in 2003 in Nashville after they were both left in their parents' vehicles in front of their child care centers.

Human Services licenses 3,700 child care agencies in Tennessee, and nearly one third of them offer transportation. With the start of the new school year, licensing staff has begun concentrating its efforts on child care agencies offering school-to-agency transportation and reviewing policies and monitoring procedures for these providers.

If you witness a child being left unattended in a child care vehicle or if there are child care vans or buses on the roads driving in an unsafe manner, dial 9-1-1 for immediate assistance. For other transportation safety violations please call the Human Services Child Care Complaint Hotline at 1-800-462-8261--that's 1-800-GO2VAN1. For more information on child care licensing, visit the DHS website at: <http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/childcare.htm>.

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